

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 155119

NODIS
FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PK, US

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PAKISTAN AMBASSADOR YAQUB KHAN

1. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING JUNE 16 WITH YAQUB KHAN (REPORTED SEPTTEL), THE AMBASSADOR ASKED FOR FIVE MINUTES ALONE WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS.
2. YAQUB KHAN SAID HE WISHED TO CONVEY HIS PERSONAL VIEW THAT U.S./PAKISTAN RELATIONS WERE CURRENTLY AT THE LOWEST EBB IN RECENT YEARS. HE WANTED US TO KNOW THAT WHEN THIS VIEW IS EXPRESSED BY OFFICIALS IN ISLAMABAD, IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF TACTICS, BUT IS GENUINELY FELT. SAUNDERS COMMENTED THAT IT WAS HIS STRONG IMPRESSION, WHILE RE-IMMERSING HIMSELF IN SUBCONTINENTAL AFFAIRS AFTER SEVERAL YEARS AWAY FROM THE SUBJECT, THAT THE NUCLEAR ISSUE DOMINATED THE RELATIONSHIP. IF THIS ISSUE WERE BEHIND US, RELATIONS ACROSS THE BOARD COULD REVERT TO A MORE

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SATISFACTORY STATE, ALTHOUGH NOT TO THE EXTREMELY CLOSE TIES OF THE EARLY 1960'S. YAQUB KHAN GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THIS TO BE THE CASE, AND FELT WE HAD ARRIVED AT A SATISFACTORY PLATEAU ABOUT 3 YEARS AGO, TO WHICH IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO RETURN.

3. THE AMBASSADOR WARNED THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE

RESENTMENT GROWING UP AMONG THE TOP CIRCLES IN ISLAMABAD ABOUT OUR "CONTINUING CAMPAIGN" ON BEHALF OF BHUTTO. THE MATTER IS BEFORE THE COURTS, THE REGIME HAS METICULOUSLY ADHERED TO CORRECT JUDICIAL PROCEDURES, AND OUTSIDE COMMENT IS PERCEIVED AS UNWARRANTED INTERFERENCE. SAUNDERS POINTED OUT THAT OUR OFFICIAL OVERTURES HAD NOT BEEN ADDRESSED TO THE JUDICIAL PROCESS, BUT ONLY SOUGHT TO HIGHLIGHT THE EFFECT ON WORLD OPINION IF THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER WERE EXECUTED. WE, OF COURSE, HAD NO CONTROL OVER EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN BY THE U.S. PRESS, PRIVATE CITIZENS AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH.

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